Erie County NY Recovery Plan

State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

2021 Report

Erie County NY 2021 Recovery Plan

Table of Contents

General Overview	2
Executive Summary	2
Uses of Funds	2
Promoting Equitable Outcomes	4
Community Engagement	5
Labor Practices	5
Use of Evidence	5
Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category	6
Project Inventory	8
Example Project	9
Additional Projects	9
Ineligible Activities: Tax Offset Provision	10

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

Erie County has set forth a comprehensive spending plan for the use of the first tranche of funding awarded to Erie County via the American Rescue Plan – the "Reinvest in Erie's Neighborhoods & Employ our Workforce (RENEW) Plan. The RENEW plan has been carefully designed in accordance with guidance from the U.S. Department of Treasury to align the U.S. Government's goals of investing in state and local governments who lost revenue and made cuts due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Erie County's plan restores cut positions, invests in our in our local economy through a wide array of capital improvement plans, and makes major investments in protecting Lake Erie for future generations. This funding presents a once in a generation opportunity to make major one-time investments in our county.

Erie County divided the first tranche of ARP funding into two pots: revenue spending which was aimed at restoring positions and spending cut or forgone due to the COVID-19 recession, and ARP eligible items with a core focus on two areas: clear water infrastructure and health equity.

Pending legislative approval, Erie County aims to focus the second tranche of spending on three areas: clean water, fiber broadband expansion, and ongoing COVID-19 response operations, especially booster vaccine campaigns and ongoing vaccination outreach to unvaccinated populations.

Uses of Funds

- a. Public Health (EC 1) Erie County was fortunate to be a recipient of CARES Act funding in 2020. The County continues to use CARES Act funding to pay for ongoing COVID-19 public health response activities including vaccination PODs, contact tracing and more. For 2021, no ARP funding is allocated towards public health expenses.
- b. **Negative Economic Impacts (EC 2)** Erie County is devoting \$2,080,000 in ARP funding towards small business promotion programs. These programs are piggybacking on successful CARES Act funding programs from 2020. \$80,000 will go towards the creation of a "one-stop" business assistance portal which is sorely lacking in Erie County. This project will be administered by the Amherst Chamber of Commerce. \$1,000,000 will go towards a shop local advertising campaign, administered by Visit Buffalo Niagara. A second \$1,000,000 will go towards a shop local gift card program, where individuals will receive a bonus \$20 when then buy a \$20 gift card to be used at local small businesses

Per New York's State's request, Erie County has transferred its Emergency Rental Assistance Program funding to NYS OTDA for administration to cover EC2.2. Erie County has retained an administrative portion to be used for program promotion and marketing.

- c. Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities (EC 3) Erie County will establish an Office of Health Equity with a dedicated and professional public health staff that will focus specifically on health equity issues and the social determinants of health. This office will prepare an annual report on health equity issues, to further guide public health spending and efforts in the community. This office is directly in line with the stated goals of the ARP State and Local Recovery Fund's mission to address disparities in Public Health Outcomes with a staff of 9 individuals including Epidemiologists. In addition, two outreach workers will be added to the Cancer Services program, to help schedule free cancer screenings and follow-up for individuals in high-risk populations.
- d. **Premium Pay (EC 4)** While Erie County implemented a premium pay program for workers who physically reported during the COVID-19 pandemic, that pay did not come from ARP specific dollars.
- e. Water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure (EC 5) Erie County will use over \$38,000,000 from the first tranche of "American Rescue Plan Act of 2021" funding received by the County of Erie be allocated to projects related to the Erie County Sewer Districts (ECSDs) and other water systems. The seven (7) ECSDs are critical to the protection of public health, the protection of the environment, and supporting economic development throughout our County. Our local waterways and specifically Lake Erie are community assets that benefit from investments in the ECSDs.

The infrastructure of the ECSDs includes over 5.8 million linear feet of sanitary sewer pipe, approximately 100 pumping stations, six (6) water resource recovery facilities (i.e. wastewater treatment plants), and other appurtenances servicing portions of more than two (2) dozen municipalities in Erie County. The Division of Sewerage Management has identified significant needs for investment in this infrastructure throughout all seven (7) ECSDs. The infrastructure investment projects will continue the Division of Sewerage Management's approach towards advancing efficiency, performing targeted improvements to mitigate operational concerns, maintaining/enhancing water quality protections, and cost effectively rehabilitating/replacing existing infrastructure. Additional projects outside the ECSD will also be funded through our Department of Environment and Planning. Planned projects include:

- Agribuiness Park Expansion of Water Tank for Water Tower that will Serve Park
- Agribuiness Park Water Lines to Service Water Tower
- Sweetland PS Tributary Area Rehabilitation
- Lackawanna I/I Pilot Collection System Upgrades
- Lackawanna Digester Replacement/Rehabilitation
- Rowley Rd Bridge Modifications (SSO Mitigation)
- N. Seine Sewer Replacement Phases I & II
- ST WRRF Solids Handling Concrete Repairs (Phase II)
- Relay 12" diameter pipe on Old Milestrip
- Open Cut Repairs (County Wide)
- District 8 CMP/ NYS Route 20A Pipe Lining
- Manhole Rehabilitation (County wide)

- District 8 Self-flushing Manhole Replacement
- CIPPL of 24" diameter pipe along Transit Rd in D5
- District 6 Manhole Replacements
- Miscellaneous Wastewater Treatment Plant Equipment Replacements
- Village of Springville N. Central Ave. Water Main Replacement
- Village of Lancaster Harold Place Sanitary Sewer Replacement
- Village of Akron Skyline Drive Waterline Installation (loop existing system)
- City of Tonawanda Sewer Replacement

Currently \$32,700,000 is allocated towards projects under plan, with another \$3,101,361 allocated to sewer projects not under plan, all in a dedicated capital account.

f. Revenue Replacement (EC 6) – Erie County's RENEW plan includes a wide array of spending under the umbrella of revenue replacement which totaled \$47,554,040. Erie County supplemented the revenue loss portion of the RENEW plan with additional county-share dollars that were made available due the ARP funding assisting New York State, which in term eliminated local aid cuts to the county totaling \$35,880,000.

Position Restorations:

Erie County's June 2020 Deficit Remediation Plan and 2021 Adopted Budget included 287 total position eliminations. Departments and independent offices submitted request for restorations of some of these cut positions, of which 107 were honored. As the county's financial situation improves and the economy continues to recover, providing departments and independent offices the resources they need to serve the public is a top priority that can be responsibly funded.

New Positions:

Based on lessons learned from the pandemic, and to meet new operational goals, 26 new positions are included in the resolutions. 10 new positions are added to the Parks Department, along with new staff in the Division of Emergency Medical Services, Purchasing, and the District Attorney's Office. These new positions and the restorations do not bring the payroll above the pre-pandemic staffing level, and are ARP-compliant.

Budget Line Restorations:

Many departments and independent offices included cuts to their budget lines as part of the 2021 adopted budget instructions. With the rapid return to normal operations, departments and independent offices have requested restorations to various lines in order to meet the public's needs. The most notable increases are to Risk Retention, per a request from the County Attorney, and an increase in Jail Management overtime which is already trending toward a large shortfall due the rapid increase in sentenced inmates as the court system clears through the COVID-19 case backlog.

Community Aid:

The COVID-19 pandemic created financial challenges for many areas' institutions. This spending plan includes support for entities traditionally supported by Erie County including the Botanical Gardens, The Buffalo Niagara Convention Center, the Naval and Servicemember's

Park, and the Workforce Investment Board as well as a wide array of support for improvements within various municipalities.

Capital Improvements:

There are a number of upcoming or overdue capital projects that are funded in the resolution, including an additional \$5,000,000 for pay-as-you-go highway funding, a new highway barn for the Harlem District, repairs to the façade of the District Attorney's Office that has become dangerous, and the SUNY Erie City Campus roof. These projects were put-off or canceled due to the pandemic.

Park System Investment:

During the COVID-19 pandemic Erie County's park system saw a massive surge in use. With many indoor options closed, Erie County residents took advantage of the beauty and fun of our outdoor spaces like they hadn't a generation.

The RENEW plan uses revenue replacement and additional county share dollars to make major investments of approximately \$14,300,000 in our parks to ensure they are in the best possible shape for our residents, and invests in some long-overdue projects including the rehabilitant of the historic Wendt Beach mansion and stables. Targeted projects include:

- Historic Wendt Stable Renovation
- Historic Wendt Mansion Renovation
- Chestnut Ridge Casino Accessibility Improvements
- Como Lake Park Lighthouse
- Chestnut Ridge Roadway/Parking Lot Paving & Improvements
- Chestnut Ridge Main Casino Parking Lot and Roadway Improvements
- Chestnut Ridge #4 (Fire Tower) Comfort Station Renovation
- Chestnut Ridge #2 Comfort Station Renovation
- Chestnut Ridge #5 (100 Steps) Comfort Station Renovation
- Ellicott Creek Island Comfort Station Renovation
- Ellicott Creek WPA Shelter (#11) Renovation
- Ellicott Creek WPA Shelter (#26) Renovation
- Como Lake Casino Improvements
- Emery Park WPA Shelter (#21) Renovation
- Emery Park WPA Amphitheatre Shelter Renovation
- Schenck House/Restroom Renovation
- Grover Cleveland Golf Course Restroom Renovation
- Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Area Parking lot and Entrance

Promoting equitable outcomes

Where applicable Erie County will use a racial equity lens to inform the delivery of SLRF funding. Some projects, such as clean water initiatives, will benefit all as they minimize outflows into Lake Erie and the surrounding watershed. Required categories:

- a. Negative Economic Impacts (EC 2): specific outreach to minority owned business that received disproportionately less PPP and other economic assistance will occur based on research previously done for a CARES Act funded small business grant program based on census tract and other data
- b. Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities (EC 3): The Office of Health Equity is specifically dedicated to studying and addressing health equity issues and the social determinants of health

Previously Erie County's CARES Act expenditures were informed using a racial equity lens. Detailed information on the Back to Business Grant's program efforts to focus on equity can be found in this report:

https://www2.erie.gov/environment/sites/www2.erie.gov.environment/files/uploads/Back_to_Business_Report-Final.pdf

Nearly all Erie County residents get their drinking water from Lake Erie, and so the efforts to improve the safety and cleanliness of the Erie County Sewer District infrastructure will benefit all. The Health Equity Office and Small Business Assistance program will be informed by a variety of data sources regarding needs based on race, census tract, and more.

Community Engagement

Going forward Erie County will solicit community feedback on a number of initiatives, in particular the ErieNet Open Access fiber network that is targeted for the second tranche of ARP funding, and the Office of Health Equity. Already Erie County is working with local leaders and community to implement a variety of projects supported by Revenue Replacement Funding.

Labor Practices

Erie County maintains robust labor protections for county contracts:

Executive Order 18 - Local and Disadvantaged Labor Requirements
https://www2.erie.gov/exec/sites/www2.erie.gov.exec/files/uploads/pdfs/Executive%20Order%2
0%2318%20-%20FINAL.PDF

New York State Labor Law Article VIII – Prevailing Wage https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/LAB/224-A

Erie County Local Law #6-1987 MWBE

https://www2.erie.gov/legislature/sites/www2.erie.gov.legislature/files/uploads/1987-6.pdf

Erie County Local Law #3-2018 -

Apprenticeshiphttps://locallaws.dos.ny.gov/sites/default/files/drop_laws_here/ECMMDIS_appid_DOS20180525060025/Content/09021343801f2571.pdf

Use of Evidence

Erie County is using an evidence-based approach for a number of projects, most intensively the Office of Health Equity who's work and recommendations will be entirely be guided by an annual report on specific health outcomes in Erie County. Evidence regarding water quality improvements, access to broadband, small business sales and more will all be incorporated into the RENEW plan and in future annual Recovery Plans.

EC-1 Evidence Based Spending: \$0

EC-2 Evidence Based Spending: \$2,080,000

EC-3 Evidence Based Spending: \$1,549,627

Table of Expenses by Expenditure Category

	Category	Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
1	Expenditure Category: Public Health		
1.1	COVID-19 Vaccination	0	0
1.2	COVID-19 Testing	0	0
1.3	COVID-19 Contact Tracing	0	0
1.4	Prevention in Congregate Settings (Nursing Homes, Prisons/Jails, Dense Work Sites, Schools, etc.)	0	0
1.5	Personal Protective Equipment	0	0
1.6	Medical Expenses (including Alternative Care Facilities)	0	0
1.7	Capital Investments or Physical Plant Changes to Public Facilities that respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency	0	0
1.8	Other COVID-19 Public Health Expenses (including Communications, Enforcement, Isolation/Quarantine)	0	0
1.9	Payroll Costs for Public Health, Safety, and Other Public Sector Staff Responding to COVID-19	0	0
1.10	Mental Health Services	0	0
1.11	Substance Use Services	0	0
1.12	Other Public Health Services	0	0
2	Expenditure Category: Negative Economic Impacts		
2.1	Household Assistance: Food Programs	0	0
2.2	Household Assistance: Rent, Mortgage, and Utility Aid	0	0
2.3	Household Assistance: Cash Transfers	0	0
2.4	Household Assistance: Internet Access Programs	0	0

	Category	Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
2.5	Household Assistance: Eviction Prevention	0	0
2.6	Unemployment Benefits or Cash Assistance to Unemployed Workers	0	0
2.7	Job Training Assistance (e.g., Sectoral jobtraining, Subsidized Employment, Employment Supports or Incentives)	0	0
2.8	Contributions to UI Trust Funds*	0	0
2.9	Small Business Economic Assistance (General)	2,080,000	2,080,000
2.10	Aid to nonprofit organizations	0	0
2.11	Aid to Tourism, Travel, or Hospitality	0	0
2.12	Aid to Other Impacted Industries	0	0
2.13	Other Economic Support	0	0
2.14	Rehiring Public Sector Staff	0	0
3	Expenditure Category: Services to Disproportionately Impacted Communities		
3.1	Education Assistance: Early Learning	0	0
3.2	Education Assistance: Aid to High-Poverty Districts	0	0
3.3	Education Assistance: Academic Services	0	0
3.4	Education Assistance: Social, Emotional, and	0	0
0.4	Mental Health Services		o
3.5	Education Assistance: Other	0	0
3.6	Healthy Childhood Environments: Child Care	0	0
3.7	Healthy Childhood Environments: Home Visiting	0	0
3.8	Healthy Childhood Environments: Services to Foster Youth or Families Involved in Child Welfare System	0	0
3.9.	Healthy Childhood Environments: Other	0	0
3.10	Housing Support: Affordable Housing	0	0
3.11	Housing Support: Services for Unhoused persons	0	0
3.12	Housing Support: Other Housing Assistance	0	0
3.13	Social Determinants of Health: Other	974,226	974,226
3.14	Social Determinants of Health: Community Health Workers or Benefits Navigators	0	0
3.15	Social Determinants of Health: Lead Remediation	0	0
3.16	Social Determinants of Health: Community Violence Interventions	0	0
4	Expenditure Category: Premium Pay		
4.1	Public Sector Employees	0	0
4.2	Private Sector: Grants to other employers	0	0
5	Expenditure Category: Infrastructure		

	Category	Cumulative expenditures to date (\$)	Amount spent since last Recovery Plan
5.1	Clean Water: Centralized wastewater treatment	22,400,000	22,400,000
5.2	Clean Water: Centralized wastewater collection and conveyance	10,300,000	10,300,000
5.3	Clean Water: Decentralized wastewater	0	0
5.4	Clean Water: Combined sewer overflows	0	0
5.5	Clean Water: Other sewer infrastructure	414,017	414,017
5.6	Clean Water: Stormwater	0	0
5.7	Clean Water: Energy conservation	0	0
5.8	Clean Water: Water conservation	0	0
5.9	Clean Water: Nonpoint source	0	0
5.10	Drinking water: Treatment	0	0
5.11	Drinking water: Transmission & distribution	699,903	699,903
5.12	Drinking water: Transmission & distribution: lead remediation	0	0
5.13	Drinking water: Source	0	0
5.14	Drinking water: Storage	0	0
5.15	Drinking water: Other water infrastructure	1,700,000	1,700,000
5.16	Broadband: "Last Mile" projects	0	0
5.17	Broadband: Other projects	0	0
6	Expenditure Category: Revenue Replacement		
6.1	Provision of Government Services	47,554,040	47,554,040
7	Administrative and Other		
7.1	Administrative Expenses	0	0
7.2	Evaluation and data analysis	0	0
7.3	Transfers to Other Units of Government	0	0

Project Inventory

Project 1: Shop 716

Funding amount: \$1,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: 2.9, Small Business Economic Assistance (General)

Project overview

- Shop 716 will incentivize local shopping by providing matching funds for the purchase of gift cards that can only be used at participated local small businesses. This project will promote our local small businesses and help them compete as consumers move increasingly towards large national retailers in the wake of the pandemic. The project will run through the end of 2021.
- https://amherst.org/shop716/

Use of Evidence

 Partner agencies will work with participating businesses to assess the increase in business linked to the program by evaluating total sales during the promotional period.

Project 2: Buy Local

Funding amount: \$1,000,000

Project Expenditure Category: 2.9, Small Business Economic Assistance (General)

Project overview

- Erie County will run a buy local campaign through the 2021 holiday shopping season to promote local shopping. The program will duplicate a successful 2020 buy local campaign and be managed by the county's official business promotion office, Visit Buffalo Niagara. The project will run through the end of 2021.
- https://stepoutbuffalo.com/erie-county-in-collaboration-with-visit-buffalo-niagaras-guideto-shopping-local-this-holiday-season/

Use of Evidence

 VBN will provide a qualitative report on the promotional campaign including surveys from local business, consumers, and an analysis of local shopping trends during the campaign.

Project 3: One-Stop Web Portal for Business Assistance

Funding amount: \$80,000

Project Expenditure Category: 2.9, Small Business Economic Assistance (General)

Project overview

- There is a need for an inclusive, referral, one-stop-shop resource website for Erie County businesses to visit to learn where to go for business assistance. This portal will cover a wide array of inquiries including: funding, lending, education, networking, marketing, guidance, mentoring, chamber, business associations, municipality direction and more. This will be a "concierge" website connecting and educating our small businesses. The project will aim to be up and running by the end of 2021, but be a permanent resource.
- Example Erie County will build from: https://nexusi90.org/

Use of Evidence

 Evidence of success will include traffic information and follow-up from the website and follow-up survey from the Amherst Chamber of Commerce team who will maintain and operationalize the site.

Project 4: Office of Health Equity & Cancer Services

Funding amount: \$974,226

Project Expenditure Category: 3.13, Social Determinants of Health: Other

Project overview

• Erie County will establish staffing and budget lines for a new Office of Health Equity within the Erie County Department of Health. This office is directly in line with the stated goals of the ARP State and Local Recovery Fund's mission to address disparities in public health outcomes with a staff of 9 individuals including Epidemiologists. The Office of Health Equity will produce an annual report that improves and expands on the current 3-year Community Health Assessment process required by NYS. The Office will direct future county and grant spending, as well as provide detailed analysis and support to not-for-profit entities to better invest philanthropic dollars into health equity issues. A core focus will be addressing the social determinants of health. The office will aim to be fully staffed by the middle of Fall 2021, and produce a first report within one year.

In addition, Erie County's existing Cancer Services program, partially funded by New York State, will hire two additional outreach workers and launch a marketing campaign to make county residents aware of the importance of cancer screening, schedule free screenings for cervical, colorectal and breast cancer, and enroll eligible residents in NYS's special cancer Medicaid program, as well as connect cancer patients and survivors with additional resources. The marketing campaign will last for through mid-2022, and the additional outreach coordinators will become permanent county employees, paid for by general fund resources with partial NYS reimbursement.

- Current Community Health Assessment: https://www2.erie.gov/health/index.php?q=community-health-assessment-cha
- CSP Website: https://www3.erie.gov/cancerservices/

Use of Evidence

- This will be a highly evidence-based operation. Key data-points to track by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual-orientation income and geography will include at a minimum:
 - i. Health Insurance Rates
 - ii. Access to Transportation
 - iii. Reportable communicable diseases
 - iv. Vaccine preventable diseases
 - v. Top mortality causes
 - vi. Obesity
 - vii. Smoking
 - viii. Heart-Attacks rates
 - ix. Mental Health Issues including suicide rates
 - x. Opioid Use

<u>Project 5:</u> Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements in the Erie County Sewer Districts <u>Funding amount</u>: approximately \$22.4 million

Project Expenditure Category: 5.1, Clean Water: Centralized Wastewater Treatment

Project overview

 This project will fund a variety of improvements at the Big Sister Creek Water Resource Recovery Facility, Southtowns Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility, Lackawanna Water Resource Recovery Facility, and/or East Aurora Water Resource Recovery Facility. The construction work at these facilities will mitigate operational concerns, maintain and enhance water quality protections, advance efficiency, and cost effectively rehabilitate / replace this infrastructure. Where feasible and/or applicable, projects will identify potential opportunities to decrease electrical loads and hence positively affect climate change.

<u>Project 6:</u> Collection System and Pumping Station Improvements in the Erie County Sewer Districts

Funding amount: approximately \$10.3 million

<u>Project Expenditure Category</u>: 5.2, Clean Water: Centralized Wastewater Collection and Conveyance

Project overview

• This project will fund a variety of improvements within the sanitary sewers, manholes, pumping stations, force mains, and other appurtenances required for the collection and conveyance of wastewater within the Erie County Sewer Districts. This will include cured-in-place pipe lining, sewer replacements, manhole rehabilitation, pumping/piping improvements, force main repairs / replacements, backup service provisions, and more. A particular focus will be on the elimination of infiltration & inflow to decrease the amount of water conveyed / treated and subsequently decrease electrical loads to positively affect climate change.

Project 7: Agribusiness Park Water Tower Storage and Water Lines

Funding amount: \$1,700,000

Project Expenditure Category: 5.15, Drinking Water, Other Water infrastructure Project

Project overview

This project will build a water storage tank and water lines to a water tower in Evans NY
at former airfield. This site is being converted into an agribusiness park to serve the local
agricultural industry and will also provide clean drinking water to the Town of Evans.
Modernized equipment will decrease electrical loads to positively affect climate change.

Project 8: Municipal Water Lines

Funding amount: \$699,903

Project Expenditure Category: 5.11, Drinking Water, Transmission & distribution

Project overview

• This project will build out two new water line systems in the Villages of Akron and Springville, to replace long-overdue waterlines. These lines are in the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning's consortium area.

Project 9: Municipal Sewer Lines

Funding amount: \$414,017

Project Expenditure Category: 5.5, Clean Water, Other sewer infrastructure

Project overview

• This project will build out two new sewer line systems in the Village of Lancaster and the City of Tonawanda, to replace aging sewer lines. These lines are in the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning's consortium area.

Performance Report

- Projects 1,2 & 3:
 - Number of small business participating
 - o Small business holiday sales vs. 2020
 - Website traffic to one-stop assistance site
- Projects 1,2 & 3 (EC 2 Required):
 - Number of workers enrolled in sectoral job training program
 - Number of workers completing sectoral job training programs
 - Number of people participating in summer youth employment programs
- Project 4:
 - Number of equity reports issued by office
 - Number of governmental initiatives launched with office support
 - Number of not-for-profit initiatives launched with office support
 - Mortality Rates by cause disaggregated by race, gender, income, sexual orientation, zip codes
 - Morbidity Rates by disease disaggregated by race, gender, income, sexual orientation, zip codes
 - Number of individuals receiving free cancer screening from cancer services programs
 - Number of individuals enrolled in cancer Medicaid
 - o Rates of Breast, Colorectal and Cervical Cancer in Erie County
 - Mortality from Breast, Colorectal and Cervical Cancer in Erie County
- Project 5, 6,7, 8, & 9:
 - o Number of projects under contract
 - Number of projects designed
 - Number of projects completed
 - Capital funding spent
 - Capital funding remaining